The Clarion Call

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Newsletter of the Department of Massachusetts

From The Department Commander

Brothers,

The Memorial Day Ceremony at the Massachusetts National Cemetery was an excellent event and very well attended by the public, Brothers of the Department as well as the 1st Military District of the SVR. **Thank you to all of the Brothers who came out to participate**. More about the Memorial Day Ceremony later in the *Clarion Call*.

The rededication of the Civil War Memorial in Wakefield was another very well-attended event. We had an informational table and had a lot of people come by and take our membership recruiting pamphlets. Hopefully, this results in a few new members.

Please mark your calendars for the other Department events that will be occurring this year, and let's build on the Memorial Day turnout to get more and more Brothers out to our future events.

Recruiting is still our No. 1 priority, and every Brothers is a recruiter! Our Camp organizer, Brother Dexter Bishop, is working to open two new Camps, and I have been in discussion with another group for a possible third new Camp. **Please work this year to recruit one new Brother to our order.** I personally have brought in one new member since the Department Encampment, and I am working on another.

We are also working to help the two Camps that are at minimum membership grow and stay active. Engaging with the public through large turnouts at events such as Memorial Day in Bourne and the Wakefield rededication helps us attract new members. Please mark your calendars and plan on participating in the General Benjamin Butler Memorial Ceremony, Saturday November 1, 2025, 1100 am Hildreth Family Cemetery 270 Hildreth Street, Lowell, MA 01850.

This year's National Encampment in Houston will be a great event, and if you are on the fence about attending, I encourage you to attend. Our very own Brother Kevin Tucker, PDC, will be elected National Commander in Chief! Brother Dan Murray, PDC will be elected Senior Vice Commander in Chief. I wish you and your family all a very safe and happy summer! Thank you for all you do for this order!

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Rod

Department Encampment 2025 – Report from the Department Commander

Brothers, we had another very successful Department Encampment this year. The Friday night *Campfire* was a lot of fun with pizza and music by "Irish Whispa" who played a great repertoire of traditional Irish songs as well as some old school rock and roll. We even had a short Civil War song sing-along!

Saturday morning began with our Annual Memorial Service. We remembered the following Brothers who passed away the previous year:

- Ronny Petit, Camp 5
- Calvin Pixley - Camp 15
- Elisha Mallory "Mal" Grant - Camp 25
- Allerton Bonney - Camp 3188

May they rest in peace.

The business session was very productive, with 23 Brothers attending the Encampment. Our very own Brother Kevin Tucker, National Senior Vice Commander in Chief, represented the CinC as Installing Officer. Additionally, we had a special guest, Brother Peter Redman, Past Department Commander of the State of Maine.

We passed two resolutions that were submitted by Brother Kevin Tucker and will be brought up at National Encampment.

1. Changes the name of the National Committee on Promotions and Marketing to the National Committee for the Promotion of the Order.

2. Allows the wearing of miniature medals. Although they are sold by the Quartermaster, they were not allowed for wear per the C&R.

The budget was presented by Department Counsel, and a line-by-line review of the budget was conducted. The final budget that passed is $52,478.00. This included money not spent in the last budget that rolled over into this budget.

Changes to the Bylaws were passed that codify in the bylaws the various GAR and SUVCW Trust Funds and the requirements of each fund.

Elections were held, and the following Officers were elected:

- Roderick J. Fraser, Department Commander
- John Wilder, Senior Vice Commander
- Rev. Peter Preble, Junior Vice Commander
- John Dupré, Secretary/Treasurer
- Council:
  1. William Naughton
  2. Daniel Murray
  3. Matthew Sargent

During the business meeting, Alexandra Anderson brought greetings from the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Ladies of the GAR, and the Auxiliary to the SUVCW.

After the installation of officers by the Senior Vice Commander in Chief, the Encampment Business Session was closed.

We gathered later that evening for the Awards Banquet, and the following awards were presented;

- The ***Roger L. Olsen Award for the Most Outstanding Brother of the Order*** for the year 2024-2025 was presented to Brother Ronald Glidden, Camp 54 Commander

- The ***PDC Stuart H. Chambers Award for Camp Recruiting*** was awarded to the following Camps of the Department for their positive growth in Camp membership for the year 2024.
  - Col. Robert Gould Shaw Camp 54
  - Gen Frederick Lander Camp 5
  - Charles H. Bond Camp 104

Brother Kevin Tucker brings greetings from the CnC to the Department Encampment.

Brother Ron Glidden being presented the *Roger L. Olsen Award for the Most Outstanding Brother of the Order* for 2024-2025 by Department Commander Rod Fraser.

The *PDC Stuart H. Chambers Award for Camp Recruiting* being presented by the Department Commander to Camp 54 Commander Ron Glidden, Camp 104 Commander Matthew Ahern, and Camp 5 represented by Dexter Bishop, PDC.

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Department Commander Rod Fraser and Alexandra Anderson from the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Ladies of the GAR, and the Auxiliary to the SUVCW.

Memorial Day Observance at the Massachusetts National Cemetery

On May 25, 2025, the First Military District, Sons of Veterans Reserve and the Department of Massachusetts participated in the annual Memorial Day observance at the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne. Brothers from the 1st Military District, SVR led the parade, marching to the sound of fife and drum. Department of Massachusetts Commander Rodrick Fraser read Logan's Order No. 11, inaugurating "Decoration Day, (now Memorial Day). The official ceremony concluded with a wreath salute at the cemetery's Veterans Memorial, followed by a rifle salute and playing of "Taps." After the main ceremony, Brothers of the Department of Massachusetts and Sisters of the Allied Orders conducted a separate commemoration ceremony at each of the gravesites of the unknown soldiers of the Civil War buried at the Massachusetts National Cemetery.

The Department of Massachusetts, led by fife and drum

First Military District, Sons of Veterans Reserve, and the Department of Massachusetts

Department Commander Roderick Fraser salutes a wreath provided by the SUVCW Department of Massachusetts

First Military District, Sons of Veterans Reserve, the Department of Massachusetts, and Sisters of the Allied Orders conduct a commemoration ceremony at the graves of Massachusetts's unknown soldiers of the Civil War.

L.A. Tifft Camp 15 has a Busy Memorial Day Weekend

L.A. Tifft Camp 15 was busy presenting the colors at four services over a two-day period over the Memorial Day weekend. Brothers from Camp 15 led the Memorial Day parade for the Town of Belchertown. Camp 15 also held Memorial Day services at Quabbin Park. Participation by Camp 15 in the Memorial Day observances also made the front page of the local paper, *The Sentinel*. Congratulations!

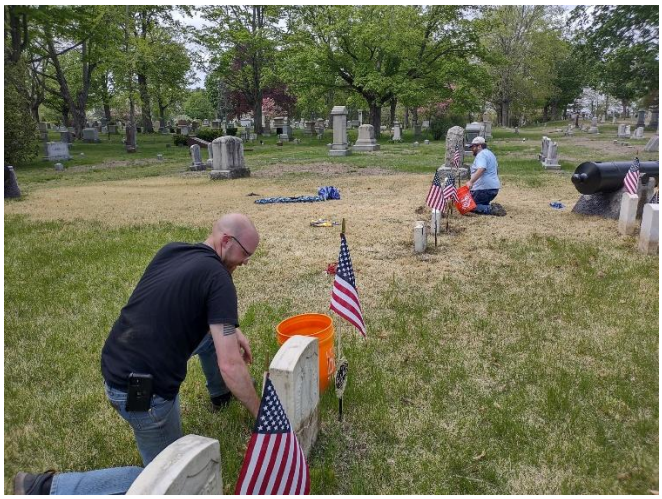
Camp 15 Color Guard

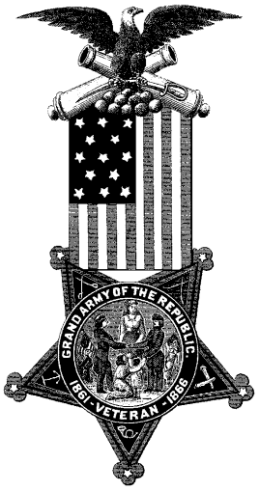
Camp 15 leads the way for the Belchertown Memorial Day parade

Camp 15, Memorial Day services 2025 at Quabbin Park

Charles H. Bond Camp 104 Continues Restoration of Lakeside Cemetery's GAR Plot

Camp Commander Matthew Ahern reports that the heavy lifting is done! Over the past year, the members of Camp #104 have been working hard at restoring the four howitzer cannons and resetting and cleaning the headstones at Lakeside Cemetery's GAR Plot. The Camp is pleased to report that the work was completed on May 4, 2025. While they were at the cemetery, Brothers from the Camp also placed flags on every Civil War veteran's grave ahead of Memorial Day. Commander Ahearn stated that the next and final step of the restoration project is to erect a new marker at the site, sharing the history of the GAR and honoring the Civil War veterans interred here.




GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC
1861 - VETERAN - 1866

Willie Grout Camp #25 Holds Grave Dedication for Civil War Veteran

On May 3, Willie Grout Camp #25, in conjunction with the 15th MA Inf. of the First Military District of Sons of Veterans Reserve, held a grave dedication ceremony at Pine Grove Cemetery in Grafton MA for Private Josiah (Joseph) Warren Houghton, a Civil War veteran and former Grafton resident who was buried in an unmarked plot in 1908. Brother Andy Kjellberg of Grafton discovered the oversight and worked diligently to correct it.

Pvt. Houghton enlisted in the Army on August 4, 1862, in Albany, NY, with the NY 113th Infantry. He fought in the Civil War and was wounded in battle in Cold Harbor, VA, on June 3, 1864. He was mustered out of the Army in 1865. Camp #25 Commander Matty Sargent led the ceremony. In attendance were Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Sons of Veterans Reserve, representatives of all four allied orders (Women's Relief Corp, Auxiliary to Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War 1861-1865, and Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic), the VFW, the American Legion, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, State Representative David Muradian, several local dignitaries, and dozens of residents. Pvt. Houghton will now be remembered by Grafton as one of their veterans.

Color Guard and *Vacant Chair* honoring Pvt. Houghton

Camp 104 Represents SUVCW at Minuteman National Historic Park *Minutemen of 1861* Event

Camp Charles H. Bond #104 represented the SUVCW on May 24, 2025, at Minuteman National Historic Park during their special Minutemen of 1861 event. The day was filled with programs and displays of original Minutemen of 1861 artifacts from the Massachusetts National Guard Museum. The Camp's booth had a lot of attention and highlighted the Camp's partnership with the Massachusetts National Guard in returning the over 700 unissued Minutemen Medals to their descendants. Numerous brochures were handed out, and multiple Civil War buffs expressed interest in joining the SUVCW.

Department of Massachusetts Senior Vice Commander John Wilder staffing a table for Camp 104.

Camp 104 Commander Matthew Ahern staffing part of the Camp 104 display.

From The Department Patriotic Instructor

In honor of the 250th anniversary celebration, I would like to remind everyone of the U.S. flag code.

U.S. Flag Code Summary

Purpose

- To show respect for the American flag and guide its proper use and display.

When to Display

- Every day, especially on national holidays
- Sunrise to sunset (or 24/7 if properly lit)
- Not during bad weather unless it's an all-weather flag

How to Display

- Highest position when flown with other flags
- Never touch the ground, floor, or water
- Raise briskly and lower ceremoniously

Respect the Flag

- Don't use it as clothing, decoration, or advertising
- Don't mark it with words or symbols
- Don't use it as a covering or drape (except over a coffin, with proper handling)

Half-Staff

- Symbol of mourning
- Ordered by the President or state governors
- On Memorial Day, flown half-staff until noon

Retirement

- When old or damaged, the flag should be burned respectfully in a ceremonial way

National Anthem

- **Stand at attention:** This means standing upright, with feet shoulder-width apart.
- **Face the flag:** If there's an American flag on display, face it. If not, face the source of the music.
- **Men's headdress:** Men wearing a hat should remove it with their right hand while keeping their hand over their heart.
- **Right hand over heart:** Place your right hand over your heart to show respect.
- **Military salutes:** Military personnel and veterans (even when not in uniform) can choose to salute the flag. Obviously, the military headgear remains in place on the head.
- **No chewing, eating, or drinking:** It's generally considered impolite to chew gum, eat, drink, or smoke during the anthem.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Stand facing the flag
- Place your right hand over your heart
- Military in uniform give a salute
- Veterans may render the military salute if they choose to do so (even when not in uniform) in the same manner provided for military personnel in uniform.

Military Reenactors, including uniformed members of the SVR

- Individuals in military uniforms, including reenactors portraying military personnel, are expected to render a military salute when the national anthem or "To the Colors" is played.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
George Maple, PDC
Patriotic Instructor, Department of Massachusetts

Editor's Note: The National Defense Authorization Acts of 2008 and 2009 amended the U.S. Flag Code to specifically allow veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel to render a hand salute during the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem.

Department Participates in *Soldiers and Sailors Monument* Rededication in Wakefield

On Saturday, May 31, 2025, the 1st Military District, Sons of Veterans Reserve and the Department of Massachusetts participated, along with the "New England Brigade" of reenactors, the "5th Massachusetts Battery" reenactors, "Be What Remains" civilian reenactors, the "Providence Brigade Band", "Historical Ambassadors of New England', the Wakefield Historical Society and Museum, Lucius Beebe Memorial Library, First Baptist Church of Wakefield, local Scout Troop 107, Wakefield school children and town officials, in the Rededication Event for the Town of Wakefield's "Soldiers and Sailors Monument" on the Upper Town Common in Wakefield, Massachusetts.

Events began at noon with a cannoneering exhibition featuring the 5th Massachusetts Battery performing volleys over Lake Quannapowitt from its 3" ordinance rifle. This was a crowd favorite and helped announce the beginning of the day's festivities.

Department Commander Rod Fraser and Department Guide Charles Lewis

At the same time, the New England Brigade was conducting a living history encampment, including demonstrations of military formations and rifle volleys using period weapons. In addition, Be What Remains conducted presentations of period dress, tools, and artifacts along with discussions on what the Civil War Homefront was like during the war.

The Providence Brigade Band performed a concert at the Wakefield Lower Common Bandstand with Civil War-era patriotic and popular musical selections. In addition, the fife and drum musicians from the New England Brigade, (our own Brother Ron Glidden and his wife, Sue) entertained the public with some military tunes.

The Lucius Beebe Memorial Library hosted an interactive display in the First Baptist Church where they displayed exhibits on the archiving process. In addition, the Town's historic
An African American Heritage Walking Tour took place, led by the Historical Ambassadors of New England. The Col. James Hartshorne House and the Wakefield History Museum hosted free open house events for all visitors. The Town of Wakefield provided shuttle buses between locations.

Department of Massachusetts and Sons of Veterans Reserve Brothers manned an information and recruiting booth, with Brothers from Charles H. Bond Camp No. 104, Willie Grout Camp No.25, Gen. Frederick W. Lander Camp No. 5, Col. Robert Gould Shaw Camp No 54 and Department of Rhode Island Maj. Gen. Thomas West Sherman Camp No. 1 participating.

At 3 PM All participating groups and hundreds of local citizens gathered on the Upper Common for a rededication program MC'd by Former Naval Commander Robert Vincent and a formal Ceremony of Rededication by the First Military District, SVR, with speakers that included national and state elected

representatives, historians, noted local residents, active military members, students, and more musical performances by the Providence Brigade Band.

After a brilliant recitation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address by a local citizen and a rousing rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic", Town Administrator Stephen Maio turned the town's Civil War monument over to the First Military District, who performed a "Vacant Chair" style ceremony for the rededication for the South Reading, (now Wakefield) Soldiers and Sailors Monument led by Department of Massachusetts Commander Roderick J. Fraser, Jr. and Department Chaplain Dexter Bishop, PDC.

After a solemn ceremony, a rifle salute by the New England Brigade, and "Taps" performed by the Providence Brigade Band, the event was closed by a few more musical performances by the band and the last cannon firings by the 5th Massachusetts Battery.

This was a wonderful event for the Town of Wakefield and all of us in the Civil War community. The citizens and visitors who attended the event came away with meaningful experiences, an education on the service and sacrifices of the town's Union heroes and great impressions of our organizations and missions.

Thank you to all the Brothers who attended and participated in the rededication.

The Department of Massachusetts information booth at Wakefield

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Color Guard of the 1st Military District, Sons of Veterans Reserve, with Commander of the 1st Military District with Major Kevin Tucker, PDC

Brother Daniel Murray, PDC, and Chaplain Dexter Bishop, PDC

Clarion Call Publication Dates and Article Submissions

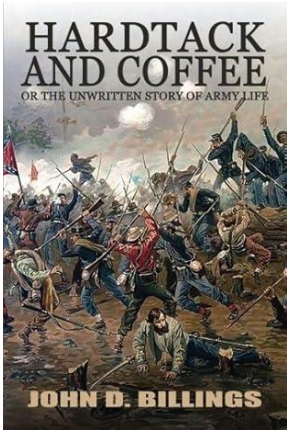
The Clarion Call is published quarterly. Anticipated publication months are December, March, June, and September (to give a few extra weeks to register for our Gettysburg trip). The Editor will email a "Call for articles" to Department Officers and Camp Commanders approximately 14 days prior to publication. However, any Brother who would like to submit an article or Camp news may do so at any time by contacting the Editor at suvcwclarioncall@gmail.com.

Book Review Column

The Clarion Call Book Review Column is intended to encourage further research into Civil War history. It is the Editor's hope to include both new books as well as old favorites worth rereading.

Hardtack and Coffee: The Unwritten Story of Army Life by John D. Billings

Hardtack and Coffee: The Unwritten Story of Army Life by John D. Billings is an indispensable classic for anyone interested in the daily realities of Civil War soldiers. Originally published in 1887, the book provides a vivid and richly detailed account of Union army life, drawn from Billings' own experiences as a soldier in the 10th Massachusetts Artillery.



Rather than focusing on battles or grand strategies, *Hardtack and Coffee* takes readers into the often-overlooked corners of military life—how soldiers camped, marched, cooked, and endured both the tedium and hardship of war. Billings writes with clarity, wit, and surprising humor, which makes the book remarkably accessible even for modern readers. His descriptions of army food (including the notorious hardtack), camp customs, punishments, and the many ingenious inventions of the common soldier are as entertaining as they are informative. For many years, this book has served Civil War reenactors as a source of information on the food that was distributed to soldiers and how it was cooked, an the uniforms and equipment used by soldiers. In fact, the book covers the entire day in the life of a soldier from *Reveille* to *Taps*.

One of the book's major strengths is its authenticity. As a primary source written by a veteran, it offers a firsthand perspective that academic histories often miss. Readers should be aware that the book reflects the language and attitudes of its time. Some content may come across as outdated or culturally insensitive by today's standards. Nonetheless, as a historical document, *Hardtack and Coffee* remains a treasure trove for Civil War enthusiasts, researchers, and anyone curious about the human side of military history.

Hardtack and Coffee is more than a memoir—it's a social history of the Union army, told by one who lived it. Whether you're a seasoned historian or a casual reader, Billings' work offers a compelling and often humorous look at soldiering in America's bloodiest conflict. Highly recommended and available on Amazon.

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